

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 03624 180930Z

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ACTION ERDA-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

IO-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05 OES-03 DODE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TECH, TH

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR POWER PLANT; MAJOR PROJECT-COMMERCE/MEPD

REF: (A) STATE 22740, (B) 75 BANGKOK 21388

1. COMMERCIAL ATTACHE ACCOMPANIED VISITING ERDA TEAM TO FEB. 17 MEETING WITH EGAT MANAGING DIRECTOR KASAM CHATIKAVANIJ. WHILE CONVERSATION DEALT MAINLY WITH SECURITY MATTERS (REFTEL A), SUBJECT OF EGAT'S PLANNED NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS WAS ALSO DISCUSSED.

2. KASAM MENTIONED PROBLEMS CAUSED BY ENVIRONMENTAL AND POLITICAL CRITICS OF NUCLEAR POWER, BUT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THESE WOULD BE SOLVED. HE EXPECTED THAT INEVITABLY THE REALITIES OF ENERGY CRUNCH WOULD WIN THESE CRITICS OVER. HE SAID HE WAS NOW PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT PROBLEM OF FINANCING THE PURCHASE OF THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, ESPECIALLY HAVING READ THAT 600 MW PLANT RECENTLY SOLD BY WESTINGHOUSE IN THE PHILIPPINES WAS AT A REPORTED COST OF ABOUT \$800 MILLION.

3. KASAM SEEMED NEVERTHELESS DETERMINED TO GO AHEAD WITH PROJECT. ASKED WHEN HE EXPECTED TO GO OUT FOR BIDS, HE SAID THAT UNTIL RECENTLY HE HAD HOPED TO ISSUE TENDERS "ABOUT NOW" BUT THAT IN VIEW OF DISOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND NECESSITY TO FORM NEW GOVERN-

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 03624 180930Z

MENT, EGAT WILL PROBABLY NOT GO OUT FOR BIDS UNTIL LATE 1976.

4. DISCUSSING DIFFICULTY OF REBUTTING ENVIRONMENTALISTS' STATEMENTS THAT NUCLEAR PLANTS ARE UNSAFE, KASAM SAID IT IS HARD TO BE SPECIFIC WHEN IT IS STILL NOT KNOWN WHETHER EGAT WILL BE PURCHASING BOILING WATER OR PRESSURIZED WATER REACTOR. THIS AND FACT THAT EGAT INTENDS TO PAY ITS THIRD INSTALLMENT ON ERDA CONTRACT FOR FUEL ENRICHMENT ON AUGUST 1 SUGGESTS EGAT IS STILL LEANING IN DIRECTION TO LIGHT WATER REACTOR WHICH SHOULD FAVOR U.S. FIRM, EITHER GE OR WESTINGHOUSE.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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